

ARTFORUM

BERLIN

Joanne Robertson

SANDY BROWN

Goebenstrasse 7

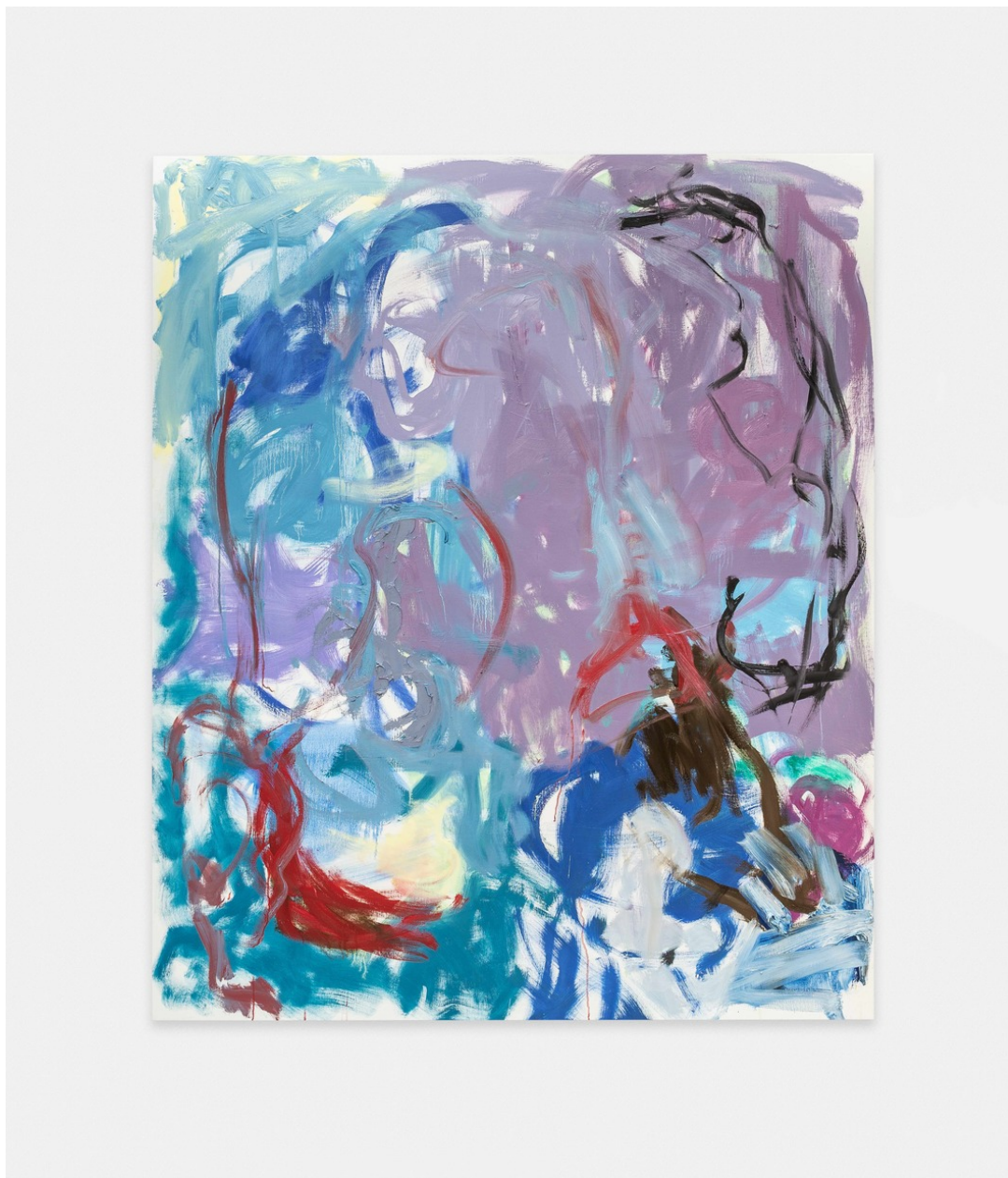
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Joanne Robertson's three large-format oil paintings hold the room at Sandy Brown, where the effusive quality of their bright, loping tangles seems to open up the Berlin gallery's tiny storefront. Swathes of blue in subtly varied hues form a thread between *Dawn*, *Howl*, and *Last Sun* (all 2022), each of which conveys a state of tentatively resolved chaos. These are pretty paintings. There is something earnest about their attention to the emotive potential of complementary colors, as in the light orange and fainter purple that seem to rise to the surface against kinetic blue and yellow marks in *Dawn*, or the immediacy of the thick, bold brushstrokes, accentuated by their contrast with stretches of blank canvas, in *Howl*. Maybe Robertson has intuited that there is room for sincerity these days and that gestural abstraction can be buoying.

Reminiscent of Joan Mitchell's calligraphic clusters and astute use of the color white, Robertson's works also resonate with the late American artist's articulation of painting as a "means for feeling 'living.'" The process of making these works was interrupted—and inflected—by childbirth, an intense, embodied experience that Robertson painted, in part, to transmute. Sinuous lines in *Howl* and black wisps in *Last Sun* unravel corporeal contours, while fleshy tones and dashes of crimson and brown make up the amorphous shapes of *Howl*. Far from an

abstracted anatomy, however, it's the sense of improvisation guiding these paintings that connects them so indelibly to the body, as they manifest the daily dance of instinct, intuition, and all the other noise by which one navigates the world.

— Camila McHugh



Joanne Robertson, *Last Sun*, 2022, oil on canvas, 70 3/4 x 59 x 1"